



Smart Transportation for Smart Growth



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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NJ TRANSIT

2003 Goals & Objectives

When Governor McGreevey took office 15 months ago, he promised to improve the quality-of-life in New Jersey, protect safety and make state government operate more efficiently and effectively in the delivery of services. The Department of Transportation and NJ TRANSIT have delivered on those promises through the Fix DMV, EZ Pass, and toll road consolidation initiatives, a \$55 million cost reduction program at NJ TRANSIT to stabilize fares, and the implementation of a \$2.5 billion capital program.

The DOT and NJ TRANSIT will build on those successes in 2003 as we support Smart Growth through targeted capital investments, accelerate the award of construction contracts to create more jobs more quickly, and improve the quality of service we deliver to the public and our local government partners.

GOAL:

TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND RENEWAL

Build public and stakeholder support behind reauthorization of the Transportation Trust Fund which expires at the end of June 2004. The Trust Fund now supports roughly half the state's \$2.6 billion annual transportation capital program. Without the Trust Fund, DOT and NJT will be forced to revert to uncertain funding which could adversely affect our planning efforts, leave federal funds on the table, and jeopardize the Trust Fund authority's debt service obligations.

OBJECTIVES:

- Prepare a 10-year capital plan in accordance with the Governor's executive order issued in January that maintains existing commitments, incorporates the DOT's Fix It First and NJT's Back to Basics strategies, and addresses investment levels needed to meet the growing needs of the transportation system.
- Convene and support a bi-partisan Blue Ribbon Transportation Commission consisting of prominent public and private sector officials to identify the state's funding priorities and recommend financing options for both capital and operating needs.
- Make the case for renewing the Trust Fund through public events, OpEds, letters-to-the-editor, stakeholder outreach that highlight the state's transportation funding needs.
- Establish a New Jersey Transportation Planning Board to coordinate and monitor intra- and bi-state transportation planning, policies and priorities in order to provide the Governor a strategy that better coordinates the resources, investments and needs of all agencies.

GOAL:

JOBS and ECONOMIC GROWTH

Maximize the potential of the \$2.58 billion joint capital program of the DOT and NJ TRANSIT, and the capital programs of the independent authorities to create jobs and support economic growth.

CAPITAL PROGRAM: Accelerate delivery of the capital program to create jobs, generate economic growth

OBJECTIVES:

- Award \$500 million in DOT construction work by the summer construction season; award over \$700 million in NJ TRANSIT contracts by the end of the year
- Cut one to four years off the time to deliver a project by abandoning the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach and implementing an accelerated pipeline delivery program

RAIL FREIGHT: Improve rail infrastructure to support growth of freight operations, enable businesses to take advantage of increased competition and reduced shipping costs resulting from the acquisition of Conrail by Norfolk Southern and CSX

OBJECTIVES:

- Implement \$50 million shared funding agreement with freight railroads to upgrade rail access into Port Newark/Elizabeth
- Undertake other capital improvements to increase rail freight capacity, allow for double stack operations

AVIATION: Support continued operations and growth of a statewide network of airports, which are critical for hi-tech & hi-value jobs, and which contribute to 70,000 civil aviation jobs

OBJECTIVES:

- Preserve the remaining key privately owned public use airports and prevent their sale to developers and conversion to additional sprawl
- Gain approval of EIS to double terminal area, improve taxiways at Atlantic City International Airport
- Support added frequencies at Atlantic City proposed by Spirit Airlines and attract new carriers, including Southwest, to begin service

JOBS and ECONOMIC GROWTH, cont'd

SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION

SOUTH JERSEY LIGHT RAIL: Start revenue service on the South Jersey Light Rail System

OBJECTIVES:

- Utilize light rail as an economic revitalization tool for Camden, Trenton, Burlington City
- Undertake strategic marketing campaign to build new ridership base, introduce rail as a new transportation option
- Pass legislation that would establish legislative guidelines for DOT's Transit Village program and dedicate a total of \$30 million for the Transit Village program. The bill would encourage municipalities to effectively plan developments around transit stations and would help fulfil the Governor's commitment to establish 14 Transit Villages by 2004.
- Pass legislation that would regulate the impacts of developments along county and municipal roads on state roads. This bill would significantly strengthen DOT's ability to prevent sprawl and congestion on state highways from developments on and near state roads. It would also require DOT to consider smart growth as a condition for granting an Access Permit. Finally, it grants the DOT the authority to negotiate and enter agreements with municipalities as a condition for granting access.
- Review capital projects for Smart Growth compliance, and redesign projects to accomplish their original objective while keeping with the criteria for Smart Growth.
- Utilize outreach meetings, press, and editorial to convey message that with the support of DOT initiative, Smart Growth will create opportunities for development and spur economic activity.
- Agree that planning by all state transportation agencies is consistent with the Governor's Smart Growth policy and promote the use of public transportation.

Goal:

SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION

Implement Smart Growth initiatives that limit congestion and encourage opportunities for Smart Growth development throughout the State; focus on where and how we will develop instead of where and how we will not.

OBJECTIVES:

- Implement **“A Test Case for Development”** by selecting a site or an area and bringing all stakeholders (from nonprofits to the development community, to public agencies) together to plan how best to focus development.
- Pass legislation that would **establish legislative guidelines for DOT’s Transit Village program** and dedicate a total of \$30 million for the Transit Village program. The bill would encourage municipalities to effectively plan developments around transit stations and would help fulfill the Governor’s commitment to establish 14 Transit Villages by 2004.
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- **Review capital projects** for Smart Growth compliance, and redesign projects to accomplish their original objective while keeping with the criteria for Smart Growth.
- Utilize outreach mailings, op-eds, and editorials to convey message that with the support of DOT initiatives, Smart Growth will create opportunities for development and spur economic activity.
- Assure that planning by all state transportation agencies is consistent with the Governor’s Smart Growth policies and promotes the use of public transportation

GOAL:

FIX-IT-FIRST/ BACK-TO-BASICS

Prioritize DOT projects for funding and delivery that repair and rehabilitate New Jersey's transportation infrastructure, clear up existing bottlenecks and improve safety on our roads and highways. Meet growing demand and attract new ridership at NJ TRANSIT by adding seating capacity, improving access, enhancing customer service and providing secure, safe, and reliable, on-time service.

FIX-IT-FIRST OBJECTIVES:

- Work with Legislature to pass Governor McGreevey's budget which will provide \$2.58 billion for transportation funding.
- Implement NJDOT's FY2004 Capital Program, which will repair 76 bridges, continue Interstate reconstruction on I-80 and I-295, modernize intersections on older state highways
- 1999 Bridge Bond: Accelerate commitment of \$242.4 million remaining balance; improve coordination with counties to accelerate draw down of their \$175 million share
- Build on the successes of FY2003, by providing efficient snow removal and significant pothole repair.
- Maintain the 4% cap for expansion projects in the proposed FY2005 Capital Program.

BACK-TO-BASICS OBJECTIVES:

- **Capacity:** complete Add more than 30,000 seats with the purchase of 100 bi-level rail cars, final delivery of Comet V rail cars, and 33 diesel locomotives to power longer trains.
- **Access:** Next installment on the Governor's commitment of parking, with up to 4,300 more spaces and funding to design another 3,200.
- **Continue planning work on:**
 - Additional Hudson River rail tunnel
 - Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, Phase III extension to Tenafly
 - Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex corridor
 - Bergen-Passaic Meadowlands rail connector

GOAL: FIX DMV

Improve security to guard against document fraud, better secure agencies and storage facilities, and screen employees. Enhance customer service by offering more convenient hours, transaction options. Upgrade antiquated technology to speed transactions, save money and offer new services.

OBJECTIVES:

- Begin issuing digitalized drivers licenses by end of July
- Develop six-point ID verification process
- Install “smart terminals” and surveillance cameras, increase police presence in every agency
- Install bar code readers in every State Police vehicle to provide immediate access to a motorist’s personal information and driving history
- Hire security Tsar; complete criminal background checks on all employees by end of year
- Offer new e-Commerce services online every six months
- Upgrade Trenton call center to allow electronic search for information in response to customer inquiries
- Purchase new mailroom bulk sorting equipment to produce longterm savings, improve efficiency
- Start Saturday hours at agencies this summer
- Institute ongoing customer service training
- Introduce credit card transactions
- Waive requirement for out-of-state licensed drivers to take New Jersey knowledge test
- Reduce call waiting by adding staff, upgrading technology

GOAL: **SAFETY**

Enhance highway, aviation, pedestrian and bicycle safety through grants, legislative initiatives and public education campaigns.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

OBJECTIVES:

- Install 20 miles of median barriers on I-78, I-80 to prevent crossover accidents
- Install 241 miles of reflectorized pavement markers
- Create “points school” for truckers with high number of violations
- Pursue legislation to achieve fine parity for out-of-state truckers; create “Safe Corridors”
- Expand weigh stations at all high traffic points of entry to state

AVIATION SAFETY

OBJECTIVES:

- Award \$13 million in state, federal airport rehabilitation grants to improve safety

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE SAFETY

OBJECTIVES:

- Award \$6 million in grants for locally initiated Safe Streets to School projects
- Utilize federal grant to launch new pedestrian safety public education program
- Utilize federal grant to launch bicycle safety program

ENHANCE DOT DRIVER SAFETY

OBJECTIVES:

- Conduct driver's license check for all new hires
- Conduct driver's license check semi-annually for all employees who operate state vehicles

GOAL:

EFFICIENCY and GOOD GOVERNMENT

Deliver on the Governor's promise to improve efficiency and effectiveness of state government services by rethinking how fundamental operations can be reformed.

PUBLIC OUTREACH OBJECTIVES:

- Expand readership of the monthly Commissioner's Report, which highlights recent accomplishments and initiatives of NJDOT.
- Notify stakeholders of pertinent NJDOT accomplishments and initiatives through proactive mailing campaign. Goal: 2 mailings/week.
- Submit op-eds, letters to the editor and appear in editorials promoting the goals and accomplishments of the NJDOT and McGreevey Administration in both daily and weekly newspapers, trade journals and stakeholder newsletters.

TOLL ROAD CONSOLIDATION OBJECTIVES:

- Support final legislative approval of consolidation legislation.
- Implement structural and operational merger of the authorities as defined by the legislation.
- Refinance, restructure \$1.85 billion of Turnpike, Parkway and EZ PASS debt

LOCAL AID OBJECTIVES:

- Simplify and clarify funding application process for counties and municipalities, reduce paper work, and introduce "one-stop" universal funding applications for multiple programs, and online application options.
- Make project delivery easier for counties and municipalities by improving the project agreement process, payment mechanism, and project review process.

GOAL:

ENHANCE QUALITY-OF-LIFE

Make a difference in everyday life by improving service quality and delivery to the public and expanding the availability of transportation options.

SIGNAGE, TRAFFIC INFORMATION OBJECTIVES:

- DOT, NJT, Turnpike, Parkway and SJTA to implement a Pilot Program to improve signage
- Upgrade web-based traffic information service with real-time video of key locations

MASS TRANSIT OBJECTIVES:

- Meet Governor's pledge to add 20,000 Park and Ride spaces over the next five years
- Open Secaucus Transfer to add more rail connections, allow for new Meadowlands access

NJT CUSTOMER SERVICE OBJECTIVES:

- Provide cleaner trains, better announcements
- Speed up ticketing process; introduce online ticketing
- Relax rules, respond to needs of senior, disabled riders

DOT EZ STORE OBJECTIVES:

- Create new DOT "EZ Stores" in high traffic areas, such as malls, train stations, to process transactions
- Offer EZ Pass applications, DMV express license, car registration renewal services, NJ TRANSIT tickets/passes
- Distribute Highway, NJ TRANSIT, Bicycle and Trail maps

GOAL:

FEDERAL RELATIONS

Protect New Jersey's transportation interests in Washington for both short-term and long-term highway and mass transit funding. The current \$950 million federal allocation NJ receives is clearly not sufficient to meet our transportation infrastructure needs. The cost of effectively addressing all our transportation infrastructure needs exceeds \$5 billion.

TEA 3 OBJECTIVES:

Work with the NJ Congressional delegation and national interest groups including NAASTO, AASTO, National Governors Association, CONEG, on a three-pronged strategy to increase the size of our federal allocation:

- **Increase the size of the federal program.** Develop a funding mechanism to substantially increase the size of the federal program, currently totaling \$31.3 billion annually.
- **Raise the minimum guarantee level.** Secure a guarantee of at least 90.5% percent of its percent of a State's contribution to the Highway Trust Fund, providing that such a move does not divert funds from mass transit.
- **Dedicate transportation dollars to transportation purposes.** Ensure that the budgetary firewalls that currently exist in TEA-21 remain.
- **Retain population-driven formulas.** Oppose efforts by Mid-Western states to change the current federal allocation mechanism based on a population driven formula compared to a road-miles formula.

FY04 APPROPRIATIONS OBJECTIVES:

- Assist Congressional delegation as it identifies and seeks earmarks for high priority transportation projects in the state.
- Assist Congressional delegation in revising Highway Trust Fund allocation formula, known as the Revenue Aligned Budget Authority (RABA), to assure annual appropriations are predictable, sustained
- Work with Congressional delegation to include earmarks for NJTRANSIT initiatives

AMTRAK OBJECTIVES:

- Protect reliability, safety of NJ TRANST Northeast Corridor service in the event of curtailed Amtrak maintenance and operations



Smart Transportation for Smart Growth

Proactive Media

The Times

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2003

Governor is moving N.J. in the right direction

By JACK LETTIERE

Gov. James E. McGreevey has proposed a new budget for the Department of Transportation and NJ Transit that demonstrates courage and common sense in its commitment to protect working families and the quality of life we enjoy in New Jersey. Confronted with a \$5 billion budget shortfall, the governor has found a way to fund 105,000 sorely needed construction jobs. The governor's budget will protect 750,000 bus and rail commuters from a fare increase through the remainder of the year. And his commitment to invest in our highways and mass transit systems means New Jersey will be at the forefront when our nation emerges from economic recession.

The governor's faith in transportation is well placed. On any given day, there are some 100 DOT construction projects — \$1.9 billion in contracts — making New Jersey's highways and local roads safe, efficient and capable of supporting a thriving economy. The amount of work we got out the door is the highest in the department's history, marking a 42 percent increase over last year.

These dollars are invested wisely. Rather than subsidizing sprawl, the state now targets its transportation dollars on "fix-it-first" projects that provide long-needed repairs to our existing highways and bridges, and overhauls of our rail and bus fleets. Transportation investment advances the governor's smart growth policy as we repair and rehabilitate our transportation infrastructure, clear up congestion hotspots and improve the flow of traffic.

On Route 1 in West Windsor, work is wrapping up on a \$13-million congestion-relief project between Nassau Park Boulevard and Carnegie Center. In Princeton Township, we are tending to old infrastructure with the replacement of the Route 27 Harry's Brook bridge. NJ Transit later this year will open the South Jersey Light Rail System, introducing a new mass transit option for Mercer, Burlington and Camden counties.

The \$2.6 billion capital budget the governor has proposed for the DOT and NJ Transit will produce more contracts, complete more-needed repairs

and add more seats on trains and buses. It will also continue a strong program of local aid for our counties and municipalities. In the short term, this level of funding will translate into jobs and more than \$6 billion in direct economic benefit. Locally, expect to see the replacement of the Southard Street bridge over Route 1 in Trenton, a \$4-million project to improve the safety of the Route 31/518 intersection in East Amwell and Hopewell, and bridge repairs along Route 130 in Mercer and Burlington counties. The reconstruction of I-295 through Burlington and Camden counties will begin under a \$34.8 million contract. And NJ Transit will add another 30,000 seats statewide on new train equipment.

These projects bring key long-term benefits, as well. Studies show that New Jersey drivers lose 261 million hours every year stuck in traffic, time better spent at work or at home with their families. The cost to our economy is more startling — \$7.3 billion annually with \$4.7 billion in lost time and \$400 million in wasted fuel. Driving on neglected roads costs New Jersey's drivers \$889 million a year in vehicle repairs, an average of \$160 per motorist. The governor's proposal will maintain the sustained and significant level of capital funding New Jersey needs to redress those impediments to its economic growth and quality of life.

This administration has a sensible transportation policy that addresses today's needs and positions us to take advantage of tomorrow's opportunities. The recent successful transition of the E-ZPass contract to a new vendor, the implementation of sweeping reforms at the Division of Motor Vehicles and broad bipartisan consensus that has formed for the proposed consolidation of the New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway are evidence that the governor has quickly and effectively begun moving transportation in the right direction. The transportation priorities the governor has identified in his new budget proposal will keep New Jersey on the right path.

Jack Lettiere is commissioner, N.J. Department of Transportation and board chairman, NJ Transit.

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South Jersey

Commentary

DOT targets tight budget to rehabbing what's there

By James P. Fox

On any given day, there are roughly 100 New Jersey Department of Transportation construction projects — a billion dollars in contracts — on our streets and highways.

Since January, the DOT has awarded 71 contracts worth \$325 million, and we will award \$235 million more by year's end, an increase of 42 percent from last year. We are fast-tracking \$300 million in engineering and right-of-way work to move critical projects that will help New Jerseyans get where they need to go as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Our capital budget alone is \$2.5 billion, but even with this massive investment, New Jersey will face a \$2.5 billion deficit to fix bridges throughout the state over the next five years.

Our mass-transit system, its vulnerabilities and deficiencies highlighted by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in Manhattan, requires hundreds of millions of dollars in new equipment.

Highways remain clogged, yet our population grows and more than eight

million people look to us to help them.

We are learning to do more with less and find new ways to fix a transportation network riddled with aging bridges, dangerous intersections and congested highways and plagued by deferred maintenance. The needs are many.

A project that best epitomizes our new approach is the rehabilitation of the Driscoll Bridge over the Raritan River, which sees more than a quarter-million cars daily. By using monies from both the Garden State Parkway, which owns the bridge, and the New Jersey Turnpike, this administration came up with a plan and awarded the first construction contract within six months.

Innovation and planning will be key as we move ahead with a number of other initiatives. We have compiled a list of the 10 most critical projects statewide, including the confluence of Interstate 295, I-76, Route 42 and Route 55 in Camden and Gloucester Counties, which produces the worst traffic congestion in South Jersey.

Reducing congestion is our highest priority. A recent study found that 261 million hours are lost annually by drivers in New Jersey, an average of 45 hours per driver. The cost to our economy is more startling — \$7.3 billion annually, including \$4.7 billion in lost time and \$400 million in wasted fuel. Driving on neglected roads also costs New Jersey drivers \$889 million annually in extra vehicle repairs, an average of \$160 per motorist.

This administration is embracing a fix-it-first approach to the state's worn infrastructure by funneling our capital dollars into projects that ease congestion and have reduced expenditures for new roads from 20 percent of our capital budget to just 4 percent. Instead of building new roads out into our rural

areas, our efforts remain focused on existing bottlenecks.

Gov. McGreevey has directed that all state transportation entities, under the leadership of the DOT, develop a comprehensive transportation master plan to guarantee that the public's money is being spent wisely and that transportation needs are met. It will be completed by December.

At NJ Transit, we've adopted a back-to-basics approach to address capacity and customer service issues. By using our equipment and our money more carefully, we've provided seats for the 4,000 people who had been forced to stand on our trains. For the first time in six years, we have increased weekend rail service into New York. Gov. McGreevey secured \$250 million from the Port Authority toward the purchase of bilevel, or double-decker, rail cars that will increase our capacity by 30 percent. And on Sept. 30, the new Midtown Direct-Montclair service, which will provide 9,500 new weekday seats into Penn Station, will be launched.

We cannot succeed without coordination between local, state and federal officials. With the upcoming reauthorization next year of the federal transportation fund, we must present a unified front, as a state and a region, to make sure New Jersey gets its fair share of federal transportation monies.

But while this administration has increased spending on highway construction from \$395 million last year to \$560 million this year, provided more rail seats, and made significant headway toward purchasing needed equipment, there's a lot more work to be done.

James P. Fox is the New Jersey commissioner of transportation.

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A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2003

50 CENTS

Toll road merger makes good planning sense

By JACK LETTIERE

Over the years there have been many debates and discussions on merging the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway — all without results. When Gov. McGreevey ran for office he made a commitment to merge the two authorities. He has kept his word. On Feb. 14, the governor announced a consolidation plan, which will result in savings, efficiency and unified transportation planning.

The Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike were established more than 50 years ago to provide an efficient roadway network. These goals have been accomplished and the two authorities have carried out their mission well. However, the demands on these entities have changed over the past 15 years. The infrastructure needs on both highways have outpaced the resources available; the lack of coordination has only exacerbated the problem.

The governor's consolidation plan addresses the issue by providing for

pooled resources and a unified transportation policy. By melding two of the state's most vital arteries we can better fulfill the infrastructure needs of both agencies. A consolidation will yield two roads with uniform purpose, uniform principles and uniform policy, poised to deliver the safe and efficient transportation network New Jersey residents deserve.

During the first year, we will save \$4 million in operating costs and eliminate more than 130 positions as we merge administrative, purchasing, legal, human resources, auditing and personnel functions. The operating savings will increase each year, reaching \$9.8 million annually by 2008.

Operational savings are only part of the picture. The fact remains that while we've come a long way to fixing the fatal flaws plaguing the E-ZPass system we inherited, \$300 million in debt remains. We know firsthand that the fiscal sleight of hand, which promised the system would pay for itself, was disingenuous. Simply put, the parkway does not have the money to

The consolidation means more than immediate savings.

continue paying its share of the E-ZPass debt.

Without this merger, a toll hike on the Garden State Parkway is inevitable in the near future. And that is unacceptable.

By refinancing outstanding E-ZPass debt, along with existing parkway and turnpike debt, we will save roughly \$15 million annually on debt service, avoid a Parkway toll hike and put E-ZPass on firm financial footing. From there we can ensure the continued viability of E-ZPass and faster implementation of high-speed E-ZPass.

The \$25 million in annual operational and debt service savings will be directed to needed infrastructure improvements on both roadways. Gov.

McGreevey demonstrated what a merger can mean for other road projects with the historic agreement last year to repair the Driscoll Bridge.

For more than 20 years everyone talked about fixing the bridge, which sees more than 80 million drivers a year. But nothing was done. In the meantime parts of the deck began falling off and light poles began toppling into the Raritan River. Motorists who pay taxes and tolls didn't care who paid for repairs, they just wanted the work done. Within months the turnpike and the parkway reached an unprecedented agreement to fund the \$230 million project. Construction will begin this year. The new portion of the bridge will be done by 2005 and rehabilitation of the old section completed by 2009.

Fiscal arguments aside, the merger makes good planning sense. For too long, New Jersey's transportation planning network has been a fractured conglomeration of agencies and authorities. Under the proposed legislation, the New Jersey Turnpike Au-

thority will be required to submit its capital program to my office for review and approval, ensuring that the Governor's Smart Growth and fix-it-first goals are incorporated into future projects on the turnpike and parkway.

If we are to restore our infrastructure, safeguard our economy, ease congestion and improve the quality of life for New Jersey's residents, we must have the necessary tools to implement Smart Growth principles. This consolidation will bring us another step closer.

Now is the time for us to work together on behalf of New Jersey's future. Legislation introduced last month was a critical step, and we owe thanks to Sens. Andrew Ciesla, R-Ocean, and Nicholas Sacco, D-Bergen, and Assemblymen John Wisniewski, D-Middlesex, Jack Connors, D-Burlington, and Assemblywoman Linda Stender, D-Union, who have sponsored bipartisan companion bills.

Jack Lettiere is New Jersey transportation commissioner.

The Star-Ledger

Speed the plow

Road crews around the state did an outstanding job keeping the highways open during and immediately after the big blizzard. With 20-plus inches of snow, that's an accomplishment.

But the need didn't end when the snow stopped falling. Budget woes or not, the cleanup effort should not have slackened, either.

The hangover from the massive storm transformed some highway ramps into the automobile equivalent of high-sided bobsled chutes, made worse because the acceleration and deceleration lanes, vital for safe merges, were often still clogged with snow.

Drivers entering the highways had to stop at the ends of on-ramps, peer around snow banks and then pick their poison: stop and risk getting rammed from behind or dive blindly into full-speed rush-hour traffic. Highway drivers were forced to swerve or slam on the brakes to avoid collisions, disrupting traffic following behind. To add to the troubles, there also were spots where one highway lane suddenly disappeared, causing spinouts and prompting dangerous lane changes.

Road workers didn't get lazy. Their numbers dropped after the snowfall stopped. The Department of Transportation had upwards of 2,000 people working during the height of the storm. Most were private contractors who headed off to clear shopping mall parking lots or other private property when the storm ended. The DOT maintenance work force left to handle most of the mopup has been chopped by two-thirds or so in the last 12 years and is down to about 500 full-timers.

That clearly isn't enough. State planners should find the money and manpower to keep the snow assault going full-bore after a storm stops. It may take financial aid from the Legislature, but the cleanup after a major snowfall can't be an afterthought.

The Press

3-17-03 OF ATLANTIC CITY

THE WAR ON POTHoles

Pols at work

Politicians learn this lesson in the crib. It's the first lesson in Politics 101. It's more important, at least in New Jersey, than perhaps anything else they will do in office.

No matter what, fix the dang potholes.

Voters will excuse a lot. Fiscal policies that don't add up ... jobs for cronies ... special legislation for campaign contributors. Voters may complain about that stuff; however, they put up with it, from politician after politician, year after year.

But politicians from town halls to the Statehouse, along with every county executive and county freeholder in the state, know that one sin is unforgivable:

Unfilled potholes.

Hence this, from state Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere, in language usually reserved for the war on drugs: "The DOT has zero tolerance for snow or potholes on our state highways. We will get after potholes once they start to appear and keep working until the job is done."

Call it the War on Potholes.

The cash-strapped state has come up with \$15 million to fight the potholes left behind by this harsh winter. Crews are already at work, aided by six "Pot Hole Killer" trucks that the state has leased. These automated babies can put down 3 tons of asphalt-and-gravel patch a day.

And there's a toll-free hotline — (800) POTHOLE — that New Jersey motorists can use to report any potholes they encounter.

So far, in figures that sound only a little like the government's inflated enemy body counts during the Vietnam War, the Department of Transportation reports it has used 600 tons of asphalt to fill 1,500 to 2,000 potholes. And that doesn't even count the crews working on county-owned and municipally owned roads.

Not that we're complaining.

We just can't help thinking, if only health care or tax reform got this kind of attention ...

But then again, those are minor bumps in the road compared to axle-busting, wheel-crunching, feel-it-all-the-way-up-your-spine potholes.

There are some things New Jerseyans just won't put up with.

The Star-Ledger

4-2-03

At last, hard times are over for E-ZPass

Once, overcome by a dangerous burst of objectivity, I promised Ed Gross, the state's point man on E-ZPass at the time, that I would give New Jersey's program a chance to prove itself before making fun of it again.

My intentions were honorable, but I am weak and so the promise was broken. Here was an electronic toll system whose construction and maintenance were financed by a pyramid scheme. It was built on the cheap by a well-connected but inexperienced contractor. There was no way E-ZPass was going to prove itself to be anything other than one of those government programs that give boondoggles a bad name. There wasn't any way either that Gross was telling me the awful truth. So I reverted to my irresponsible ways as E-ZPass staggered to the brink of self-destruction.

Fiscally unsound, wretchedly managed and badly constructed, E-ZPass New Jersey-style set a standard for ineptitude that will stand the test of time.

That said, I hereby predict that now that an "Under New Management" sign has been posted outside its new service center in Newark, E-ZPass will join the ranks of the functioning. There are all sorts of rumors circulating about why, back in March 1997, MFS Technology (now WorldCom) got a \$400 million contract. These speculations have one thing in common: No one is suggesting that merit had much to do with the choice.

The deal struck with the new contractor, ASC State and Local Solutions, to operate and maintain the system comes to \$450 million over 10 years, and state

Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere says that so far he's impressed with the firm's performance.

With WorldCom, "the major stars had to be in alignment" for a driver to get a problem straightened out with a phone call to the service center; now it's routine, said Lettiere.

Roughly half of the 61,000 calls to E-ZPass last week were handled by a new automated system and the remainder by customer service personnel, whose ranks have been increased. It is much easier to open an account online now, with 60 percent of the 2,000 new ones being opened that way last week.

The upgraded Web site got 90,000 hits its first week.

There have been lots of common-sense changes. If you have an E-ZPass account and for one reason or another you are recorded as not paying a toll, your account gets debited. In the old days, you would be notified that you owed E-ZPass a \$25 administrative fee because no one bothered to find out if you had an active account.

Over the past five years, E-ZPass has generated a blizzard of false violation notices. One reason for that was the fact that WorldCom was paid a fee for every violation notice and thus had every reason to ticket as many vehicles as possible. ACS's bonus will be limited to a percentage of fines collected.

Under the old system, when a windshield transponder was broken, the message screen in the toll lane would read, "Go," leading drivers to think everything was fine. Now the message box takes the trouble to invite you to call the service center for a replacement.

Wait times have been established for various transactions: two minutes for phone calls to connect; 10 minutes to attend to walk-ins; four days to mail out transponders; 10 days to resolve account disputes. The service center on McCarter Highway is now open on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

All these improvements do not come cheaply. ACS, which also operates E-ZPass at the New York-New Jersey Port Authority bridges and tunnels, will get \$45 million a year for the next 10 years. It starts out with 2 million customers. The majority of Turnpike and Parkway users are now E-ZPassers.

"We think that ACS recognizes that we're in the service business, that their first priority is to satisfy our customers," Lettiere said.

For all the negative news E-ZPass has generated, the program is popular with the public. The vast majority of E-ZPass users have never run afoul of the agency. Drivers like the convenience of the system, the sense of superiority that comes from zipping through tolls and leaving the unenfranchised lined up in the cash lanes.

Nobody stole any money. Nobody got hurt. No lasting harm was done. But no matter what they do to fix it, E-ZPass 1997-2003 will always be my favorite boondoggle.

John McLaughlin is a Star-Ledger columnist.



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A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

Using an unused ramp 3-4-03

At little cost, the new Department of Transportation commissioner, Jack Lettiere, could make himself a hero to the thousands of Shore area drivers who use Routes 18 and 138 in Wall. All he has to do is put down a little blacktop to turn the exit from Route 138 to the never-completed southbound Route 18 into a northbound entrance ramp.

By doing that, he would allow eastbound motorists on 138 to get onto Route 18 north without intersecting with drivers getting off Route 18 to head east on 138. Regular users of the highways know how difficult the exiting and merging maneuver can be at this cloverleaf, especially during rush hours. Putting the southbound exit to use would eliminate the problem.

This idea has been suggested more than once by readers who have written to the Press' "Joe on the Go" traffic column. Plans to complete the southern end of Route 18 to the intersection of Route 35, 34 and 70 were set aside long ago. Taxpayers could recoup their investment in the exit ramp if the DOT would pave a short path to allow traffic to loop over to the never-used northbound lanes of Route 18 south of 138.

A safety improvement 3-8-03

New Jersey's new transportation commissioner, Jack Lettiere, is a man of action. The other day, we urged him to turn an unused exit ramp on Route 138 east in Wall into an entrance to Route 18 north. Although the DOT hadn't touted it, bids for the project were sought last month and construction could begin in April.

The alterations will allow driving to get off Route 138 and onto Route 18 without having to deal with those who are merging onto Route 138 east from Route 18 south. The exit ramp has gone unused for years, awaiting completion of the southern section of Route 18. That project has been taken off the drawing board.

The ramp alterations will cost \$350,000, evidence that even minor highway projects don't come cheap. Nine accidents over the past three years at this cloverleaf, however, demonstrate the need to take advantage of an opportunity to make an improvement for safety's sake.

The Star-Ledger

McGreevey sets first spike in \$70M ship-to-rail project

BY RON MARSICO
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

It wasn't quite as historic as the driving of a gold spike to mark the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

But Gov. James E. McGreevey tapped the first silver spike yesterday for a \$70 million upgrade of the ship-to-rail facility at the marine terminal in Elizabeth.

Joking that he was no longshoreman after missing the spike a couple of times, McGreevey touted a project that within four years will handle up to 1 million cargo containers a year, up from 228,000 last year.

"Our administration is committed to ensuring the vitality of this port," McGreevey said against a backdrop of containers and unloading equipment.

State Department of Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere, meanwhile, said another \$80 million will be used to make various off-site rail freight improvements.

Currently, 87 percent of containers leave Port Elizabeth on trucks, with just 13 percent on rail cars. With the upgrades, the rail figure will grow to 25 percent.

Officials said that shipping by rail will remove thousands of trucks from area roads. "It makes sense for the environment," Lettiere said. "It makes sense for New Jersey drivers because it will mean less trucks on our highways."

The project includes creating expanded rail terminals at the Maher and APM facilities and one mile of track to connect with freight rail lines to points along the East Coast and in the Midwest. The first phase of the project is expected to open in early 2004, with the second phase due to be completed in late 2005.

"This will be the most efficient transportation system of its kind in the nation," said Brian Maher, president of Maher Terminals Inc.

The project is being funded by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates

the marine terminals in Elizabeth and Newark.

McGreevey said investment in the region's ports will continue in the coming years — amounting to \$4.4 billion in total outlays — despite the state's dire fiscal condition.

"The port is creating jobs, stimulating the regional economy," said McGreevey, noting container cargo at the Port of New York and New Jersey jumped 13 percent last year.

The growth of rail freight at the facility has grown exponentially, from just 20 containers a month back in 1989, said Vincent Aulisi, an official with the International Longshoreman's Association Local 1235.

Anthony Coscia, chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, added, "It's just smart government, working in a very efficient way."

The Star-Ledger

3-5-03

On dangerous roads, double the fines

Governor to target highways where crashes and deaths are high

BY JOE MALINCONICU
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Fines for speeding and other traffic violations would double along more than 500 miles of highway in New Jersey under Gov. James E. McGreevey's plan to improve road safety, officials said yesterday.

Stretches of highway where there have been high numbers of crashes and deaths would be desig-

nated as "Priority Safety Zones," and the larger fines would apply in those areas, officials said.

The state has not completed its list of potential safety zones, but officials said it will include at least parts of Route 1, where 7,329 accidents occurred in 2001, and sections of Route 9, where 4,114 crashes happened.

The proposal, which needs approval from the Legislature before

it can take effect, is part of McGreevey's "Operation Restore Safety" initiative that is being unveiled today. Officials said the higher fines would be enacted in conjunction with stepped-up police enforcement.

"If we're going to deter unsafe driving, we have to show that we're serious about this," one McGreevey administration official said.

Under the plan, the fine for driving up to 9 mph over the speed limit would rise from \$78 to \$156, while the penalty for driving 20 to 24 mph over the posted speed limit would jump from \$193 to \$386.

The proposal would not change the number of points the Division of Motor Vehicles assesses against violators' licenses.

The state already doubles fines for traffic offenses on the 600 miles of highway where the speed limit is 65 mph, as well as in areas where

road construction is under way

Administration officials said they were lining up support from legislators to get the program approved quickly. Some influential groups that represent motorists and truck drivers already have endorsed the governor's plan.

"We know that education alone isn't going to change things, and you can do some engineering to design things to improve the roads," said Pam Fischer, spokeswoman for AAA-New Jersey. "But nothing works without the third prong, which is enforcement. We're talking about saving people's lives. Sometimes, you've got to take some drastic measures to do that."

"If there's a truck driver who knows he's on a bad stretch of highway where there's been a lot of accidents and he's still doing something like speeding, then I think he ought to get hit with a double fine," said Gail Toth, head the New Jersey Motor Truck Association.

One advocate, however, opposes the initiative.

"Practically speaking, it's just a scare tactic," said Steve Carrellas, New Jersey coordinator for the National Motorists Association. "I object to this."

Carrellas cited a 1998 study by the Texas Transportation Institute that analyzed data from 42 states that enacted laws imposing stiffer fines in construction zones. That study, which examined accidents that occurred between 1984 and 1995, determined that the larger penalties did not have any significant impact on the number of crashes or fatalities.

"I think it's a good idea to identify the high accident areas, but they're prejudging the solution," Carrellas said. "What they're proposing might not be appropriate for some of these areas."

In some cases, Carrellas said, the state might have better success

reducing crashes by simply improving the roads instead of setting higher fines.

But state officials cited a 2001 study by the Arizona Department of Transportation that determined the number of crashes in construction zones fell by more than half after fines were doubled.

"That study is based on more recent data and that's what we're going by," the McGreevey administration official said.

The plan being unveiled today was set in motion in November, shortly after three tractor-trailer accidents occurred on the same day, killing three people and causing massive traffic jams. The causes of those accidents were very different.

On Route 78 in Lebanon Borough in Hunterdon County, one person died when a truck swerved into oncoming traffic after its tire blew out. On Route 287 in Franklin Township in Somerset County, two people were killed in a chain-reaction crash that started when someone stopped for a ground hog on the road. And on Route 80 in Fairfield in Essex County, a tractor-trailer flipped making a turn.

In the aftermath of those crashes, the state has already announced it would expedite construction of a \$50 million truck inspection and weigh station on Route 78 in Greenwich Township in Warren County.

Officials have been reluctant to place all the blame on truck drivers. The doubled fines, they say, would apply to all motorists.

"I don't know if these fines will change people's driving habits, but they've got to try something," said Toth, from the truckers' group. "Now they're coming out with cars that have DVDs. This is insanity. When you're driving, you're supposed to be paying attention to the road."

May 7, 2003

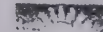
USA
TODAY

AP

HOME NEWS TRIBUNE

NEWS THAT HITS HOME IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

East Brunswick Weather



Temp: 76 °F

Hi: 75 °F

Lo: 52 °F

How safe is Route 1? U.S. to help N.J. find out

Published in the Home News Tribune 5/07/03

By RICK MALWITZ
STAFF WRITER

The rate of motor-vehicle deaths in New Jersey has declined from 4.0 per 100 million miles driven in 1967 to 1.1 in 2002. "That's not good enough," said state Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere, who has invited a federal task force of inspectors to New Jersey to determine whether there are safety measures state officials may have overlooked.

On May 19 a Safety Impact Team of state and federal transportation officials will do a statistical analysis of accidents on a 10-mile section of Route 1, between Interstate 95 in Lawrence and College Road in Plainsboro.

The next day the team will tour the highway, analyzing roadway factors such as composition of the pavement, signage and guardrails. While state officials are familiar with the road, federal officials will be able to give the highway "a fresh look," said Lettiere, at a meeting yesterday the Home News Tribune Editorial Board.

The Safety Impact Team, which will include persons from the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and National Motor Carrier Association, is the first of its kind.

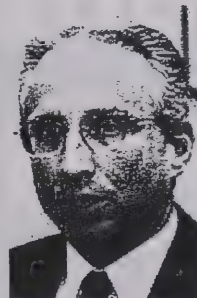
"The credit goes to Jack Lettiere," said Hassan Raza of the FHWA. "He discussed it with us, asked us to look at the highway, and if we are successful we will use this as a national model."

Once the team studies the 10-mile section of Route 1, it will focus elsewhere in the state. Among state highways, Route 1 is the most dangerous and deadly, with 7,329 crashes and 20 fatalities in 2001. Second is Route 9 with 4,114 crashes and 12 fatalities.

An accident May 1 on Route 1 in Linden killed six, when a motorist crossed center curbing, crashing head-on into a second car, killing all five occupants of the second car.

Lettiere, who said he is uncomfortable discussing highway deaths in terms of statistics since each fatality represents someone's loved ones, said reducing highway deaths further is a "shared responsibility."

The driver is responsible for his driving behavior. "Our job is to make sure the roadway is not doing anything to contribute to accidents," said Lettiere.



Home News Tribune

Jack Lettiere
Transportation
commissioner



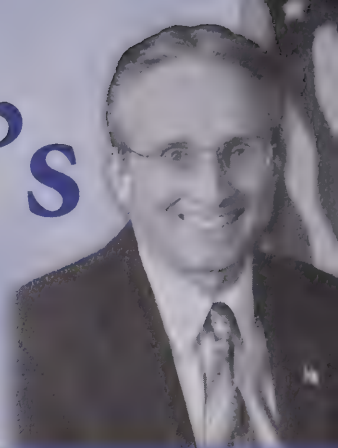
Smart Transportation for Smart Growth

Public Outreach



The Commissioner's REPORT

New Jersey
Transportation
Highlights



Governor
James E. McGreevey

April 2003

Commissioner
Jack Lettiere

News briefs

**Governor McGreevey plans
to consolidate Parkway, Turnpike**

See page 2

NJDOT unveils \$2.5 capital program

See page 3

Potholes target of \$15 million effort

See back page



Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere and Philadelphia Eagle Troy Vincent have recorded a radio announcement that urges motorists to follow three simple safety rules. It is being aired on New Jersey stations during April, May and June.

Making our highways safer **'Safety First': Governor McGreevey's safety initiative**

I am proud to announce that on March 5, NJDOT released "Safety First: Governor McGreevey's Highway Safety Initiative". **Safety First** is a three pronged approach to improve highway safety and save lives throughout the State. It targets engineering, education and enforcement improvements that will make a real difference in the way New Jersey motorists drive and the roads they travel.

Every year more than 700 New Jersey residents lose their lives in auto accidents. In November, Governor McGreevey directed the state Department of Transportation to convene a Highway Safety Task Force with members from NJDOT, the State Police, AAA, New Jersey Motor Carriers, Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier

**Smart
Transportation
for
Smart Growth**

Helpful Numbers
See back page

Continued on page 2

'Safety First' Continued from front page

Safety Administration. **Safety First** is the result of the collaborative effort.

Safety First will implement engineering initiatives, designed to create greater visibility on our highways and improve emergency and traffic response in the event of an accident. For better driving conditions, NJDOT will install more than 500 miles of reflective pavement markers and introduce high visibility tape markings at every construction site in the state.

In addition, **Safety First** will spend over \$15 million to install median barriers throughout the state to reduce the risk of deadly crossover accidents. NJDOT will also increase its Emergency Service Patrol (ESP) incident management.

Through educational initiatives, **Safety First** will teach safer driving behavior. Education initiatives include new car-truck safety questions on the Drivers Test, a partnership with the Department of Education to improve driver education classes and mandatory truck safety lessons for CDL violators.

Finally, through added enforcement, **Safety First**

is designed to safeguard drivers through stringent enforcement of safety regulations. **Safety First** will raise fines for trucks that have faulty equipment and out of state trucks which are overweight. It will double fines for speeding and other hazardous driving violations in "Safety Priority Zones," corridors with high accident frequencies to reduce the risk of a crashes. **Safety First** also commits the NJDOT and the State Police to a truck inspection station at every major truck point of entry into the state within five years.

In addition to engineering, education and enforcement initiatives, Governor McGreevey has made the Highway Safety Task Force a permanent entity at the NJDOT. Recognizing that safety is not a static issue, I will meet with the Task Force on a regular basis to monitor the success of **Safety First** initiatives and to examine future initiatives for improving safety in New Jersey. To give us a better local perspective on safety issues, I have invited members of the League of Municipalities and the New Jersey Association of Counties to join the Task Force as well.

Consolidating toll authorities

Governor McGreevey plans for merging of Parkway, Turnpike

On February 14 Governor McGreevey announced a plan to merge the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway. Consolidation will result in savings, efficiency and unified transportation planning. The Senate in March passed enabling legislation.

The Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike were established more than 50 years ago to provide an efficient roadway network. These goals have been accomplished and the two authorities have carried out their mission well. However, over the past 15 years, the infrastructure needs on both highways have outpaced the resources available; the lack of coordination has only exacerbated the problem.

The Governor's consolidation plan addresses the issue by providing for pooled resources and a unified transportation policy. A consolidation will yield two roads with uniform purpose, uniform principles, and uniform policy, poised to deliver the safe and efficient transportation network New Jersey residents deserve.

During the first year, we will save \$4 million in operating costs and eliminate more than 130 positions as we merge administrative, purchasing, legal, human resources, auditing and personnel functions. The operating savings will increase each year, reaching \$9.8 million annually by 2008.

Operational savings are only part of the picture. The fact remains that while we've come a long way to fixing the fatal flaws plaguing the E-ZPass system we inherited, \$300 million in debt remains. Simply put, the Parkway does not have the money to continue paying its share of the E-ZPass debt.

Without this merger, a toll hike on the Garden State Parkway is inevitable in the near future. And that is unacceptable.

By refinancing outstanding E-ZPass debt, along with existing Parkway and Turnpike debt, we will save roughly \$15 million annually on debt service, avoid a Parkway toll hike and put E-ZPass on firm financial footing. From there we can ensure the continued viability of E-ZPass and faster implementation of high-speed E-ZPass.

Fiscal arguments aside, the merger makes good planning sense. For too long, New Jersey's transportation planning network has been a fractured conglomeration of agencies and authorities. Under the proposed legislation, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority will be required to submit its capital program to my office for review and approval, ensuring that the Governor's Smart Growth and Fix It First goals are incorporated into future projects on the Turnpike and Parkway.

'Fix It First' in FY 04

NJDOT unveils \$2.5 billion capital program

On March 3, I joined with NJ TRANSIT Executive Director George Warrington to announce a proposed \$2.58 billion capital program for the Department of Transportation and NJ TRANSIT that advances Governor McGreevey's anti-sprawl "Smart Growth" initiative, while supporting over 100,000 jobs.

The program, which has been presented to the Legislature for its approval, would be funded with \$1.16 billion in state funding and \$1.42 billion in federal funding. In a time of fiscal crisis, Governor McGreevey has maintained the state's commitment to transportation infrastructure. The Governor's budget will enable NJDOT to fund "Fix It First" projects, enhance safety and improve the quality-of-life for working families throughout the State.

Among others, the \$1.3 billion for NJDOT projects will provide \$183 million for safety and roadway preservation, \$126 million for congestion relief, and \$290 million for bridge repairs. The \$1.3 billion for NJ TRANSIT will provide \$222 million for rail infrastructure, \$172 million for new locomotives and rail cars, and more than \$100 million for safety and other service improvements.

Major NJDOT projects include the reconstruction of sections of I-80 in Bergen County and I-295 in Camden and Burlington counties. For the second year in a row, just 1 percent of the overall program will be used for highway expansion projects, significantly lower than the 20 percent level of previous programs. **The same amount of work is on the street. We have simply redirected the funds towards projects that repair and improve the infrastructure we already have.**

To encourage Smart Growth and redevelopment in

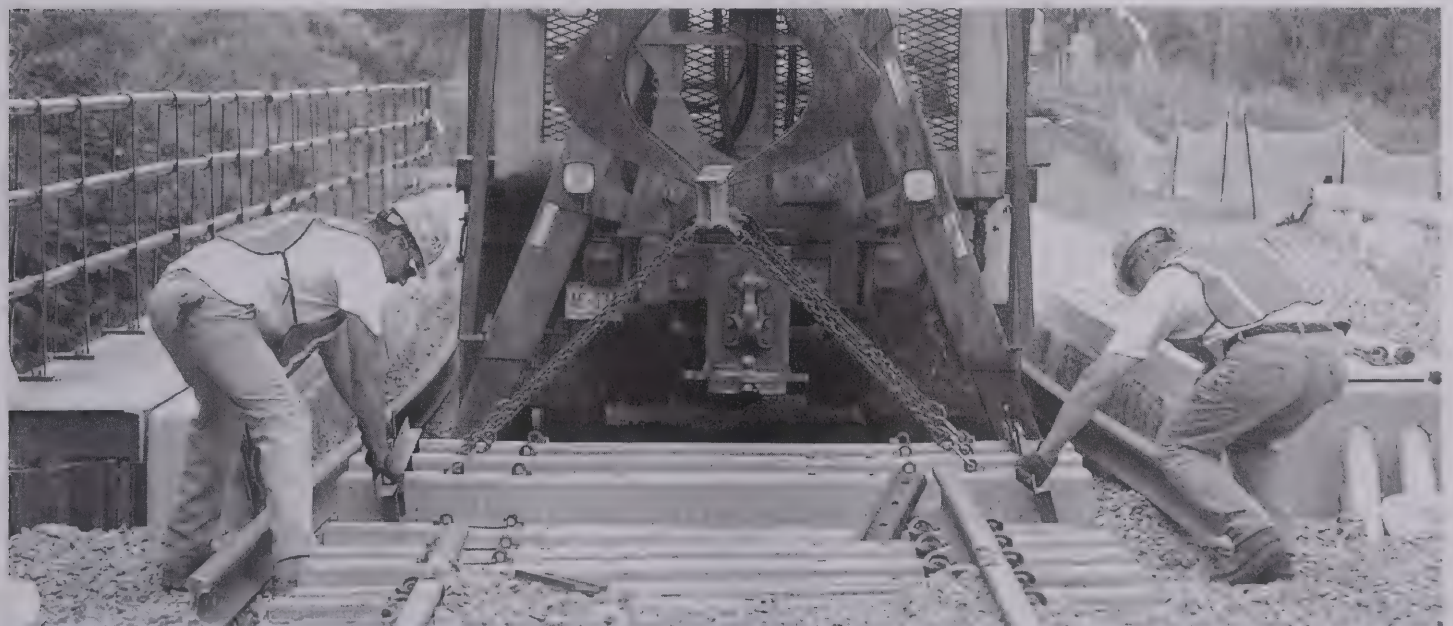
urban and older suburban areas, our program will advance a series of projects that would increase mobility and accessibility, such as improved access from I-280 to downtown Newark and from I-676 to downtown Camden. Substantial funding is proposed for the reconstruction of the Holland Tunnel approaches in Jersey City.

The program also proposes \$265 million in Local Aid support for county and municipal road projects. As part of the program, \$5 million is set aside for urban areas and \$3 million is proposed for transportation improvements for communities designated as "centers of place" under the State Development and Redevelopment Guide Plan.

Safety improvements are addressed in the proposed program through a series of short-term and long-term highway intersection projects designed to reduce accidents and traffic circle elimination projects.

The proposed program is aggressive and it will satisfy many of New Jersey's transportation needs. However, this year alone there will still be more than \$2 billion worth of unfunded NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT project that are ready to go to construction. These are needs that will go unmet.

I am committed to securing additional funding for critical transportation projects. We will have an excellent opportunity with the reauthorization of the federal Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA-21) and with the renewal of the State's Transportation Trust Fund. We have proposed a significant program for FY'04, and we will work very hard with every level of government to ensure we have the resources to fund more in the future.



South Jersey Light Rail Line moves ahead

Perched on a bridge over the Cooper River north of Camden City Center, workers continue to set track for the South Jersey Light Rail

Line. This important public transit project will give residents access to the towns along the Camden to Trenton corridor.

Making our highways safer

NJDOT launches \$15 million attack on potholes

Under a \$15 million initiative, the New Jersey Department of Transportation is ready to take on the spring pothole season with 100 road crews, six special "pothole killer" trucks, paving contractors and a new online reporting system.

NJDOT is prepared to commit all of its 100 road crews to fill potholes and to call in paving contractors to entirely repave stretches of road badly damaged by potholes. To help the NJDOT keep on top of repairs, I would encourage you to report potholes either by calling toll-free: 1-800-POTHOLE, or by logging onto <http://www.njdot.nj.gov>.

Although the actual extent of this year's pothole problem will not be known until the advent of spring, NJDOT is geared up to undertake substantial repairs if necessary. This has been a severe winter weather season, with snow totals of 56 inches, five times the totals for last winter.

Potholes are created by major fluctuations in temperatures that cause moisture in roadways to freeze and thaw, breaking up the pavement. Such temperature changes typically occur in the spring as days become warmer, but temperatures drop below freezing at night.

NJDOT crews will fill potholes the old-fashioned way – by shoveling asphalt into the craters, and with the use of automated "pothole killer" trucks that require just a pair of workers to make repairs. A half dozen of the trucks will be used statewide, each capable of putting down three tons of patch a day.

Since January 1, we have poured more than 600 tons of asphalt into potholes across the state as temporary repairs until the warmer temperatures allow for permanent repair work. The 600 tons of asphalt was used to fill an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 potholes.

But, of course, the job has just begun.

New Jersey
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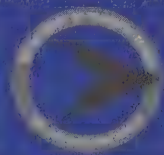


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Director of Local Government	Aaron Watson	(609) 530-2840
Legislative Liaison	Sharon Shinkle Gardner	(609) 530-4821



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MOVING FORWARD

MOVING FORWARD
is the official monthly
publication of the
New Jersey Motor Truck
Association

Issue 27

The Voice of the New Jersey Trucking Industry . . . Dedicated to Safety and Service

May 2003

States Commitment to Highway Safety



Dear Friend,

As Transportation Commissioner, there is no greater area of concern for me than the safety of our roads. New Jersey is very fortunate to have a governor who shares my concern. New Jersey's highways play a vital role in the strength of the State's economy and in the quality of life of our residents, and it is critical that all vehicles and drivers be able to share the road safely and courteously.

In March, we launched Safety First: the

Governor's Highway Safety Initiative based on a collaborative effort by representatives from the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the State Police, AAA, the New Jersey Motor Truck Association and the Federal Highway Administration. It is a balanced program that will reduce the risk of accidents for cars and trucks alike. Safety First is designed around a three-pronged approach: engineering, education, and enforcement.

For example, we have redesigned the written drivers test given to every new driver in the state to include questions about sharing the road with trucks. We are installing new high visibility tape and paint on the road in construction sites and 500 miles of high visibility reflectors to improve driving conditions at night and during inclement weather. We are investing \$15 million for median barriers to prevent fatal crossover accidents. And the State Police are stepping up enforcement of speeding and aggressive driving to ensure other drivers are not posing a significant risk to your safety.

This Administration is committed to ensuring your safety on our highways. If you would like to find out more about safety programs at NJDOT, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jack Lettiere
Transportation Commissioner

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NEW JERSEY Constructor

Spring 2003

A Publication of the Associated General Contractors of New Jersey

Keeping Transportation on the Move

By JACK LETTIERE

N.J. COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORTATION AND BOARD CHAIRMAN OF NJ TRANSIT

New Jersey is fortunate to have one of the most sophisticated and fully evolved multimodal transportation systems in the world. It is also the busiest in this country given our high population density and volume of traffic. And while we feel strongly that our transportation system in New Jersey is first-rate, it is an older system with many highways in need of reconstruction and many bridges beginning to reach the end of their service life.

Despite the most serious fiscal crisis this State has ever faced, Governor James E. McGreevey delivered a \$2.6 billion capital program for Fiscal Year 2003 and has proposed the same level of funding in his FY 2004 budget proposal. Transportation spending on capital projects has not been reduced by one penny. But with both the Transportation Trust Fund and TEA-21 coming due for reauthorization, the challenges are daunting.

Early this year, Governor McGreevey began building the foundation for renewal of the Transportation Trust Fund by directing the creation of a Blue Ribbon Transportation Commission to identify the state's long-term transportation priorities and to develop a menu of financing options. Former Transportation Commissioners Louis J. Gambaccini and John P. Sheridan, Jr., as well as Ray Pocino of the Laborers International Union agreed to serve on the commission. Also lending their talents are Al Koepe, President & COO of PSE&G; New Jersey Future Executive Director Barbara Lawrence; NJIT President



Robert A. Altenkirch, and Monmouth County Freeholder Harry Larrison, Jr. The willingness of this caliber of leadership to serve on the commission is testament to the importance felt throughout the state for transportation and its contribution to our economy.

The DOT this year will award 31 construction contracts worth \$420 million, plus \$50 million to \$80 million in operations contracts, such as for resurfacing. In addition, the DOT will award another \$150 million for Local Aid contracts. A similar level of work is proposed for FY 2004 in Governor McGreevey's budget. That means \$50 million-plus contracts for projects on Route 1&9, Route 139 and the Route 46, 23 and I-80 interchange can be put out to bid.

But if more funding was available, nearly \$900 million in capital, operating and Local Aid contracts

(Continued on page 8)

MEMBER NOTES

In its 77th year of business, Railroad Construction Company of South Jersey was awarded the 2002 Contractor Safety Award and the 2002 Certificate of Commendation from the National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association. They have also recently moved to a new location at 705 Mantua Avenue in Paulsboro, New Jersey. They are also proud to announce a new hire – Ms. Deena Miller.

Keeping transportation on the move (Continued from page 6)

could be awarded in the next budget. And as we look forward to FY 2005, the projected gap continues to grow. In short, the work is ready to go – the funding to make many of these projects happen is not.

Awaiting the renewal of the Transportation Fund, however, will not stop the DOT from continuing to streamline its project management systems. We have set a goal of being able to deliver 100 projects worth \$1 billion a year. The DOT also will continue to progress projects through Design, permitting and Right of Way so that when construction funding becomes available, contracts are ready to go bid.

The task of renewing the Transportation Trust Fund is just half the job. Of the \$2.6 billion Governor McGreevey proposes to invest in DOT and NJ TRANSIT projects in FY 2004, over half the funding —\$1.42 billion—is anticipated from the federal government. Assuring New Jersey continues to receive its fair share of federal dollars and at higher levels is a key priority for our state delegation in Washington. In order to grow the program, we have to look at options such as drawing down the Highway Trust Fund balances to provide more funding for the highway and mass transit accounts.

The enactment of TEA-21 established an important principle by directing that all highway user fees collected by the federal government get invested promptly in highway and transit programs. Congress must preserve TEA-21's highway funding guarantees and firewalls that protect transportation dollars from getting redirected to other federal discretionary spending programs. This blocks the ability to artificially limit spending on transportation in order to divert resources to non-transportation programs.

In addition, the Revenue Aligned Budget Authority (RABA) that Congress enacted as part of TEA-21 to protect the integrity of the Highway Trust Fund needs to be refined. The RABA mechanism enables the level of guaranteed funding to be adjusted to reflect revised Highway Trust Fund estimates. But the mechanism is based on future projections, resulting in radical funding swings such as we experienced in FY 2003. The RABA mechanism must be adjusted to provide for a "look back" correction and eliminate the "look ahead" method.

Our work is cut out for us. But with the leadership of Governor McGreevey and our Congressional delegation, I am confident that New Jersey is well positioned to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that await us.

MEMBER NOTES

Irvin Richter, the Chairman, CEO and founder of Hill International, Inc. was recently honored as a Fellow by the Construction Management Association of America. The company has also established a new subsidiary, Hill Energy Systems, Inc. to provide power augmentation solutions to owners and operators of combustion turbines. In addition to the new subsidiary, they have opened their 20th office in Trenton, New Jersey, which will be headed by Jack DeTalvo, Ed.D. Hill International has also hired D. Clarke Pile, P.E. as Senior Vice President and New York Regional Manager and Alann Ramirez as the Head of their San Francisco office. They have also promoted Maurice R. Masucci to Vice President and Frank J. Giunta to Senior Vice President of its New Jersey Construction Claims Group.

Join The Campaign For New Jersey's Future Executive Director's Report

The Transportation Trust Fund needs to be renewed. The current dedicated user fee can only cover the current bond debt. Experts tell us that renewal by the New Jersey Legislature and approval by the Governor will be needed and a vote by the public will be needed later on the issue of dedicating renewal funds. To make sure these steps occur, we must start now to show our leaders that the public is behind a strong renewal and that they understand what a user fee investment in transportation can do for our State. Here are some steps you can take to help ensure New Jersey's future.

ONE NEIGHBOR AT A TIME

So, this is it! Time to campaign in every way we know for a strong renewal of the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund. Coincidentally this is the time of year when all the yard work is in full swing and the neighbors come out of winter hibernation. Let's start with them. Here are several talking points for communicating over the back yard fence.

- We should not have to worry about our family's safety as they move about over the bridges and roads in our neighborhood. One third of New Jersey bridges and roads need significant repairs. Safety is everyone's concern. A strong Trust Fund will allow us to make sure those roads and bridges are safe!
- We have the most densely populated state and one of the lowest user fees in the United States. That is a recipe for further congestion.
- User fees paid at the pump are often paid by out of state vehicles traveling through our corridor state. They should pay fees in line with the fees their state collects.
- User fees are dedicated to the roads, bridges, and public transit. We get tangible transportation improvements for our money.

- A reasonable raise in the user fee of 12 cents will cost less than \$3.00 per vehicle per week. Also, adjusting future user fees for the cost of living can assure real progress in fixing our roads and bridges. These are ideas whose time has come!



Richard L. Forman
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ONE EMPLOYEE AT A TIME

We cannot assume that all our employees understand the critical need to renew the Trust Fund. Even if they know the importance, they may not appreciate how valuable their efforts will be to educate their family, friends and neighbors. Payroll stuffers and posters will be available this summer and fall. Tell your supervisory personnel to talk about this issue on your projects.

ONE COMMUNITY LEADER AT A TIME

Take every opportunity to tell your religious leader, your banker, or fellow business owner about the renewal. Explain that New Jersey must show a strong effort to fund transportation and to match federal funds if we are to secure a fair share of federal dollars. Every community is affected by poor transportation. Community leaders can communicate effectively with public officials and they have a responsibility to do so.

ONE PUBLIC OFFICIAL AT A TIME

It's true that the New Jersey Assembly, the New Jersey Senate and the Governor will be the public

MEMBER NOTES

Oxford Environmental has moved to a new location. They can now be reached at 3121 Route 22 East in Branchburg, New Jersey.

officials who will approve the Trust Fund renewal. However, every call or conversation they have with local officials is important. Do you know who your town council members are? Who your mayor is? Who the county freeholders are? Make it a point to contact some of them. You will find them very receptive to constituents' concerns.

Every personal contact you make can leverage our issue up the political ladder.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

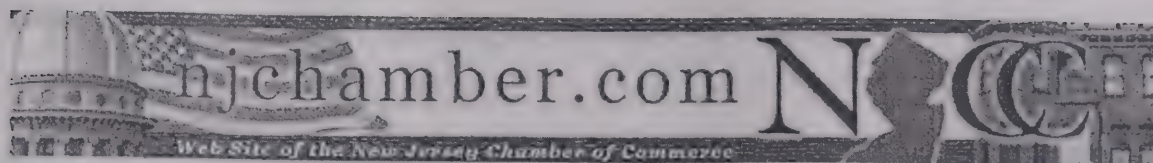
AGC can provide more talking points and sample letters you can submit to the editor of your community's weekly newspaper. We have power point presentations for Kiwanis Clubs and soon we will have a special transportation primer written in plain language from the Alliance Foundation. There will be powerful statistics showing the transportation needs and the economic benefits of stronger investment. There is very specific information about much needed projects for safety and road preservation, congestion relief, local aid, bridge repairs, new rail

MEMBER NOTES

Applegate Associates was named in the top ten largest independent safety consulting firms that are not owned by brokers or insurers by the Business Insurance magazine. The October 22, 2002 issue ranked the companies by revenue from safety consulting services. Also, as of January 1, 2003, Jason Karamanol has been serving as Vice President of Field Operations.

infrastructure, etc. from the New Jersey Department of Transportation and New Jersey Transit, New Jersey's counties and municipalities. It is a compelling story that needs to be told by all of us.

We are all in this together, so let's give it all we've got. The citizens of New Jersey and our industry deserve no less. Thank you for your support.



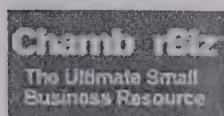
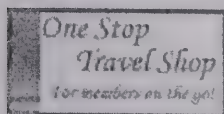
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Established in 1911

Friday, March 28, 2003

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State Chamber News

"Where's the BEIP?" Coalition Formed to Save Program: The chamber will take the lead on a new coalition that will fight the proposed elimination of the Business Employment Incentive Program (BEIP). The Governor plans to scrap the successful program as part of his FY2004 budget. [Click here](#) for more information. [Click here](#) for some facts about the BEIP.

Proposed Water Tax May Drown Some Businesses: The Senate Environment Committee recently released a bill that would unfairly tax the consumptive water use of industrial and commercial businesses. [Click here](#) for more information.

It Sure Seems Like Business is Being Targeted this Year: Read an op-ed by Michael Egerton that details a host of new bills in the Legislature that are targeting business in a big way and have the potential to hurt companies that are already suffering from the current economic downturn. [Click here](#) for the article.

Thanks to All Who Attended the 66th Annual Walk to Washington: The 66th Annual State Chamber/Wachovia Walk to Washington and Congressional Dinner was another success this year due to the participation of 1,900 state business and legislative leaders. The State



DOT Commissioner April 23 Breakfast Guest: State DOT Commissioner Jack Lettiere will talk to members at the April 23 issues breakfast about the Governor's Smart Growth plan and how it relates to the state's transportation systems. The event will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the Forsgate Country Club in Jamesburg. Lettiere will also talk in detail about the recently proposed \$2.58 billion capital program for the DOT and New Jersey Transit. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

Small Business Conference May 9: The Sixth Annual NJ Small Business Conference, co-hosted by the State Chamber, the U.S. Small Business Administration and Fleet Bank, is scheduled for Friday, May 9 at the New Brunswick Hyatt. For more information, contact Kevin Friedlander. [Click here](#) for registration, exhibit and sponsorship options.



NJDEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell (center) was the featured speaker at the chamber's March 21

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May 06, 2003



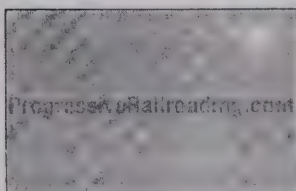
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Eastern Class Is, New Jersey team up to tackle increasing truck traffic (5/1/03)

On April 29, New Jersey announced an \$80 million program designed to improve railroad access to Port Newark/Elizabeth and the Meadowlands, and slow truck traffic on state highways.

The program involves a joint \$50 million initiative between New Jersey Department of Transportation, and [Norfolk Southern Railway](#), [CSX Transportation](#) and [Conrail](#) to increase rail capacity in the Port Newark/Elizabeth marine terminal complex, Oak Island Yard and along a 10-mile stretch of the Lehigh Valley Line leading into the port. The state and railroads each would provide \$25 million.

The parties plan to add a second mainline on the Chemical Coast Line serving the port complex; build a second track near Conrail's Oak Island Yard to improve train movements and eliminate delays; construct a second mainline on the Lehigh Valley Line between Bound Brook and Clark to allow trains to move in both directions simultaneously; and acquire additional property in Oak Island to add capacity and eliminate a large inventory of stored containers.

The state and railroads also plan to spend \$30 million to eliminate a grade crossing at NS' Croxton Yard in Secaucus — which is expected to experience more traffic after the opening of the nearby Secaucus Transfer later this year — by building a road bridge over the facility.

The three railroads currently move 25 million tons of freight annually into northern New Jersey terminals compared with 283 million tons moved by trucks each year.

A modernized rail system could double intermodal business and increase merchandise carloads 50 percent, railroad officials believe.

[Return to Home Page](#)



JAMES E. MCGREEVEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1035 PARKWAY AVENUE

P.O. BOX 601
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0601
609-530-3535

JACK LETTIERE
COMMISSIONER

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to report that Governor McGreevey has proposed a fully funded budget for the Department of Transportation and NJ TRANSIT in FY2004. The proposed budget demonstrates the Governor's commitment to both a strong economy and a high quality of life for the residents of this State.

Confronted with a \$5 billion budget shortfall, the Governor has found a way to maintain funding for a \$2.58 billion Capital Program that will:

- Directly support 105,000 jobs.
- Protect 750,000 bus and rail commuters from a fare increase through the remainder of the year.
- Generate more than \$6 billion in economic activity.
- Provide \$265 million for Local Aid to counties and municipalities to preserve property tax relief for our residents.

The Governor's faith in transportation is well placed. On any given day, there are some 100 DOT construction projects – \$1.9 billion in contracts– making New Jersey's highways and local roads safe, efficient and capable of supporting a thriving economy. The amount of work we got out the door is the highest in the Department's history, marking a 42 percent increase over last year.

The \$2.58 billion capital budget the Governor has proposed for the DOT and NJ TRANSIT will produce more contracts, complete more needed repairs and add more seats on trains and buses.

The Program has been designed to ensure New Jerseyans benefit from this investment both today and in the future. This year, NJDOT will spend \$126 to clear up bottlenecks throughout the State. Sitting in traffic is not just a waste of time; it is a waste of money: every year, congestion costs the State's economy an estimated \$7.3 billion. With policies such as Fix-it-First and Smart Growth, this budget ensures that every transportation dollar we spend comes back to us many times over. The Governor's proposal will maintain the sustained and significant level of capital funding New Jersey needs for a strong economy and a high quality of life.

This budget represents an excellent opportunity for the transportation community and for the State as a whole. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead as we take full advantage of the Governor's remarkable vision. Thank you for your time.
Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jack Lettiere
Transportation Commissioner



JAMES E. MCGREEVEY
GOVERNOR

JACK LETTIERE
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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P.O. BOX 601
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Dear Friend,

Knowing that you share my concern for highway safety, I thought you might be interested in learning about some of work we are doing to make New Jersey's roads safer. This month, I had the privilege of announcing Governor McGreevey's new highway safety initiative, Safety First.

Safety First is based on a collaborative effort by members of the Governor's Highway Safety Task Force and is designed to improve safety and save lives through a three pronged approach: engineering, education and enforcement. Engineering initiatives will improve driving conditions and reduce the risk of fatal accidents throughout the State. Education initiatives will teach safer behavior for new drivers and CDL violators. And finally, stringent enforcement will deter those who would endanger others on our roads.

Major Safety First initiatives include:

- \$15 million Median Barrier Program
- New Car-Truck Questions on the Drivers Test
- A Truck Safety Inspection Station at Every Major Point of Entry into the State within 5 Years
- Doubled Fines in "Safety Priority Zones," (Corridors with High Accident Frequencies)
- Increased fines for Overweight Trucks and Trucks with Faulty Equipment
- Heightened Enforcement of Speeding and other Safety Violations

For those initiatives requiring legislative action, Senator Shirley Turner has introduced legislation in the State Senate.

In addition, the Governor has made the Safety Task Force a permanent entity at NJDOT, and we will continue to meet on a regular basis to monitor the progress of Safety First and to discuss future actions we might take to reduce the risk of accidents in New Jersey.

I've attached full summary of Safety First initiatives as well as an article that appeared on the front page of the Star Ledger to give you a better idea of the work we are doing. Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jack Lettiere
Transportation Commissioner



JAMES E. MCGREEVEY
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609-530-3535

Dear Friend,

Knowing that you share my concern about the condition of our roads, I thought you would be interested to learn that Governor McGreevey has just launched a \$15 million pothole repair program. This has been a particularly severe winter weather season in New Jersey; we have already seen more than five times the snow totals for last winter with over 56 inches of snow. Throughout the season, safety has been our highest priority, and NJDOT road crews have worked around the clock to keep the roads safe and clear.

But as you know, our job at NJDOT does not end when the snow stops falling. When winter weather begins to thaw, potholes appear across the State.

Governor McGreevey's \$15 million program will fill thousands of potholes throughout the State. Marking the largest investment since the winter of 1996, the program will utilize:

- Six "Pothole Killers": state of the art patching machinery
- 100 traditional road crews: a force of more than 300 NJDOT employees
- More than 5000 tons of patch material

Potholes can be dangerous and they can inflict costly damage on our vehicles. We are ready to fill these menaces, but we need your help in identifying problem spots on our state roads. I would encourage you to call our hotline, 1-800-POTHOLE or log onto the NJDOT website to report the potholes you encounter. Just go to NJDOT.NJ.GOV and click on the pothole. Please call your local or county officials to report potholes on local and county roads.

Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me with any future concerns you might have.

Sincerely,

Jack Lettiere
Transportation Commissioner



JAMES E. MCGREEVEY
GOVERNOR

JACK LETTIERE
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TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0601
609-530-3535

Dear Friend,

I am writing with exciting news for the community of Union Township and for the entire State of New Jersey. On Monday, April 28, New Jersey Transit opened a new rail station on in Union Township, providing residents and visitors of Union with access to more than 50 daily trains along the Raritan Valley Line.

Nestled between Kean University and the Schering Plough Corporation, the \$24.8 million Union Station will promote Smart Growth and spur economic development in the Townley Section of town without adding congestion on local roads and highways. Already, the township has begun to reap the benefits of the station with a handful of developments slated for the surrounding area, from housing and hotels to businesses and restaurants.

Encouraging the use of public transportation is an important part of my Smart Growth initiative to limit congestion and preserve open spaces throughout the State. Transit takes cars off the roads and eases the costly congestion that is eroding quality of life in New Jersey. NJ Transit projects that more than 800 daily commuters will take the train at Union Station.

The opening of the Union Station is only our latest effort to make public transportation a secure and viable option for working families throughout the State. Since the beginning of this administration, NJ Transit has adopted a Back-to-Basics approach designed to increase capacity, improve customer service and ensure reliable on-time service. I have attached a list of recent initiatives at NJ Transit for your consideration.

I know the new Union Station will prove to be an invaluable asset for Union Township and for communities along the entire Raritan Valley Line. Information and schedules for the Union Station can be found at www.NJTransit.com.

Thank you for your continued interest in you community. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

James E. McGreevey
Governor of New Jersey



JAMES E. MCGREEVEY
GOVERNOR

JACK LETTIERE
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1035 PARKWAY AVENUE

P.O. BOX 601

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0601

609-530-3535

Back-to-Basics at New Jersey Transit

In the last year, we have worked very hard to make transit a secure and viable option for working families. Our Back-to-Basics approach will provide customers with extra seating capacity and secure, reliable, on-time service.

Recent improvements at NJ Transit include:

Capacity:

- Since June: 26 additional trains providing 17,000 additional seats on our daily rail service to New York.
- This month: 11 more weekday trains
- New and longer buses with more seats on 14 routes
- Added trips to 35 bus routes

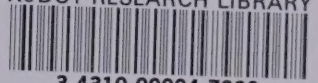
Customer Service:

- Enhanced website and automated telephone schedule information for bus, rail and light rail services
- Faster printing tickets at new ticketing machines
- Expanded hours of off-peak round trip tickets
- More frequent cleaning of restrooms
- "Extraordinary" Interior Cleaning of rail cars every 45 days, busses every 25 days.

Security:

- Increased uniformed and plainclothes police presence at stations and on trains.
- Anti-Terror training for employees.
- Established checkpoints at several stations and terminals
- Barriers and K-9 patrols at major terminals.

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